



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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**WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU SEEKS COMMENT ON McMURDO
GROUP REQUEST FOR WAIVER TO PERMIT EQUIPMENT AUTHORIZATION AND USE
OF EMERGENCY POSITION-INDICATING RADIO BEACON WITH AUTOMATIC
IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM HOMING**

WT Docket No. 15-110

Comment Date: June 8, 2015

Reply Date: June 23, 2015

On January 16, 2015, McMurdo Group (McMurdo) filed a request for waiver of Sections 80.1061 and 80.1101(c)(5) of the Commission's Rules¹ to permit equipment authorization for its emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) with Automatic Identification System (AIS)² position locating (EPIRB-AIS).³ EPIRBs are emergency radiobeacons carried on board ships to alert others of a distress situation, and to assist search and rescue (SAR) units in locating those in distress by transmitting a distress signal on 406.0-406.1 MHz for communication with the COSPAS-SARSAT satellite system⁴ and a lower-powered homing signal on frequency 121.5 MHz. EPIRBs must conform to international and domestic standards that contain minimum requirements for EPIRBs' functional and technical performance.⁵

¹ 47 C.F.R. §§ 80.1061, 80.1101(c)(5).

² AIS is a VHF maritime navigation safety communications system standardized by the International Telecommunication Union that "provides vessel information, including the vessel's identity, type, position, course, speed, navigational status and other safety-related information automatically to appropriately equipped shore stations, other ships, and aircraft; receives automatically such information from similarly fitted ships; monitors and tracks ships; and exchanges data with shore-based facilities." 47 C.F.R. § 80.5; *see also* Amendment of the Commission's Rules Regarding Maritime Automatic Identification Systems, *Report and Order*, WT Docket No. 04-344, 21 FCC Rcd 8892, 8894-8901 ¶¶ 4-11 (2006).

³ Request for Waiver, dated Jan. 16, 2015.

⁴ COSPAS-SARSAT is an international satellite-based SAR system established by Canada, France, Russia, and the United States. COSPAS is an acronym for a Russian phrase meaning space system for search and distress vessels; SARSAT stands for Search and Rescue Satellite Aided Tracking.

⁵ Section 80.1061 requires EPIRBs to meet the technical and performance standards contained in Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM) Standard 11000.2 for 406 MHz Satellite Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs), dated June 20, 2002. (RTCM has revised the standard and the Commission has sought comment on whether to amend the rule to require EPIRBs to meet the requirements in RTCM Standard

McMurdo requires a waiver because it intends to offer options for position locating capability for its 406 MHz EPIRBs that do not comply with the requirement that EPIRBs contain a homing beacon that transmits only on frequency 121.5 MHz. Specifically, McMurdo intends to offer three options: a) AIS and 121.5 MHz position locating, b) AIS position locating only, and c) 121.5 MHz position locating only. McMurdo seeks waiver for the first two options of the requirement that EPIRBs contain a homing beacon that transmits only on frequency 121.5 MHz, and because in the first option the 121.5 MHz signal will be interrupted while the AIS messages are transmitted.⁶ Consequently, McMurdo requests a waiver of Sections 80.1061 and 80.1101(c)(5) to permit the certification and use of the 406 MHz EPIRB with AIS position locating only and the 406 MHz EPIRB with AIS and 121.5 MHz position locating.

McMurdo's EPIRB-AIS is designed to operate on the AIS VHF Data Link to transmit identity and GPS location information to SAR personnel on the international AIS channels (AIS A – 161.975 MHz and AIS B – 162.025 MHz). The AIS position locating signal will use burst technology to increase the probability that the message will be received. Additionally, the AIS message is programmed with a unique nine-digit identification code in which the first three digits identify the device as an EPIRB and the last six digits identify the manufacturer and the individual unit.

We seek comments on the waiver request.

Procedural Matters

Interested parties may file comments and reply comments in response to the waiver request on or before the dates listed on the first page of this *Public Notice*. All pleadings must reference WT Docket No. 15-110. Parties may file comments using (1) the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), (2) the Federal Government's eRulemaking Portal, or (3) by filing paper copies.⁷

- Electronic Filers: File comments electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/> or the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Filers should follow the instructions provided on the website for submitting comments.
- In completing the transmittal screen, filers should include their full name, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions, filers should send an e-mail to ecfs@fcc.gov, and include the following words in the body of the message, "get form." A sample form and directions will be sent in response.

11000.3 for 406 MHz Satellite Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs), dated June 12, 2012. *See* Amendment of the Commission's Rules Regarding Maritime Radio Equipment and Related Matters, *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, WT Docket No. 14-36, 29 FCC Rcd 2516, 2519 ¶ 9 (2014). McMurdo states that its EPIRB-AIS otherwise meets the revised standard except with regard to features at issue in the waiver request.) Section 80.1101(c)(5) requires EPIRBs to meet the requirements in International Maritime Organization (IMO) Resolution A.810(19) Performance Standards for Float-Free Satellite Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) Operating on 406 MHz, as amended by IMO Resolution MSC.56(66), and IMO Resolution MSC.120(74); IMO Resolution A.662(16) Performance Standards for Float-Free Release and Activation Arrangements for Emergency Radio Equipment, and; ITU-R M.633-3 Transmission Characteristics of a Satellite Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon (satellite EPIRB) System Operating Through a Satellite System in the 406 MHz band.

⁶ McMurdo notes that RTCM is currently drafting a standard for EPIRBs with AIS, and states that McMurdo will comply with the draft standard. The RTCM proposed standard requires AIS transmissions to be interleaved with the 121.5 MHz signal.

⁷ *See* Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings, *Report and Order*, GC Docket No. 97-113, 13 FCC Rcd 11322 (1998).

- Paper Filers: Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and two copies of each filing.

Send filings by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail. Address filings to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

- Deliver hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings to FCC Headquarters at 445 12th St., SW, Room TW-A325, Washington, DC 20554 between 8:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Use rubber bands or fasteners to hold deliveries together. Dispose of all envelopes before entering the building.
- Send commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743.
- Send U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail to 445 12th Street, SW, Washington DC 20554.

Parties are requested to send one copy of their comments and reply comments to Best Copy and Printing, Inc., Portals II, 445 12th Street, S.W., Room CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554, (800) 378-3160, e-mail FCC@BCPIWEB.com.

The request, and comments and reply comments filed in response to this *Public Notice* are available for viewing via the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) by entering the docket number, WT No. 15-110. The documents also will be available for public inspection and copying during business hours in the FCC Reference Information Center, Portals II, 445 12th Street S.W., Room CY-A257, Washington, D.C. 20554. They may also be purchased from Best Copy and Printing, Inc., telephone (800) 378-3160, facsimile (202) 488-5563, TTY (202) 488-5562, e-mail FCC@BCPIWEB.com.

Alternate formats of this *Public Notice* (computer diskette, large print, audio recording, and Braille) are available to persons with disabilities by contacting the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (TTY), or send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov.

This proceeding has been designated as a "permit-but-disclose" proceeding in accordance with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.⁸ Persons making *ex parte* presentations must file a copy of any written presentation or a memorandum summarizing any oral presentation within two business days after the presentation (unless a different deadline applicable to the Sunshine period applies). Persons making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentation must (1) list all persons attending or otherwise participating in the meeting at which the *ex parte* presentation was made, and (2) summarize all data presented and arguments made during the presentation. If the presentation consisted in whole or in part of the presentation of data or arguments already reflected in the presenter's written comments, memoranda or other filings in the proceeding, the presenter may provide citations to such data or arguments in his or her prior comments, memoranda, or other filings (specifying the relevant page and/or paragraph numbers where such data or arguments can be found) in lieu of summarizing them in the memorandum. Documents shown or given to Commission staff during *ex parte* meetings are deemed to be written *ex parte* presentations and must be filed consistent with rule 1.1206(b). In proceedings governed by rule 1.49(f) or for which the Commission has made available a method of electronic filing, written *ex parte* presentations and memoranda summarizing oral *ex parte* presentations, and all attachments thereto, must be filed through the electronic comment filing system available for that

⁸ See 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.1200(a), 1.1206.

proceeding, and must be filed in their native format (*e.g.*, .doc, .xml, .ppt, searchable .pdf). Participants in this proceeding should familiarize themselves with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.

For further information, contact Mr. Jim Shaffer of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Mobility Division, at (202) 418-0687, james.shaffer@fcc.gov.

Action by the Deputy Chief, Mobility Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.

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